Endless Dark

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Endless Dark

by WhisperElmwood

Summary

Will swallows, wipes at his mouth, his eyes, whispers; “What are you?”

Hannibal smiles.

“Come to me.”

Will walks. Will walks in an endless night. Until he finds the beast that has been waiting for him.

Notes

Yeah, so, I've never written for this fandom before, but I have consumed far more of it than I thought right to do so without at least attempting to contribute lol

So have the beginnings of a S3AU in which Hannibal is far more than he seems and Will is beginning to understand.

Also, sorry for any mistakes, this hasn't been BETA'd and I bashed it out in one sitting over about an hour of work.

A soft skittering noise sounds from the darkness, somewhere to his right; the sound of tiny claws on stone echoing around the emptiness. Will Graham pauses, feet stumbling just slightly as he looks futilely into the deep shadows, stops walking for the first time in weeks, months, maybe years.

Breath catches in his throat as his eyes move restlessly, seeking the source of the noise.

Try as he might, he can see nothing. For there is nothing to see. Only shadows and night and eternal darkness. Not even stars prick the immeasurable black above him. There is nothing, endless nothing.

Catching the breath nearly lost, Will begins to walk once more. The stone beneath his feet is black as soot, his every step sending up curling clouds of dust.

Something about the dark is almost comforting. Not in the way that his stream was, but the sensory deprivation of the dark affords him a clarity he has been missing for months. Illness and manipulation both have taken more from him than he had ever realized.

And now, here, in the ceaseless dark, Will is finally alone with his thoughts. Finally able to put his mind in order.

In the weeks Will Graham has been walking, he has come to better know himself.

~*~

A point of light.

Will's fraying shoes, the leather and canvas blackened and long since begun to tear and break he has been walking for so long, scuff against the stone with every step. Echoes that fade into the darkness.

He sees the light, and he moves toward it, but he does not change his pace. He knows he will reach it. Feels, somewhere deep within himself, that this is what he has been walking toward this whole time. Whatever he finds there has been waiting for him. As patient as the dark is endless.

He shakes his head as a sound reaches his ears.

The first sound he has heard in - he has no idea - since the skittering thing in the darkness. A sound akin to hundreds of thousands of feathers brushing together. Of thick shifting fur. The susurrus of a gentle breeze through dead, drying leaves on skeletal branches.

As he moves closer, the sound deepens, becomes clearer. The single point of light becomes two. Evenly spaced. Eyes, watching him.

The sound is that of a flame whipping in the wind. Wings beating against a gale. A mainsail caught in a storm.

A figure stands in a hazy, maroon tinged glow.

Will steps into the light.

~*~

Hannibal, but not Hannibal, stands before him. Hannibal in his truest form. His first form and his favored form. Shifting between the two, and more, never settling long enough to identify. The air around Hannibal flickers and shifts, a haze that is the source of the crashing, cracking, rending sound filling the boundless darkness.

Will straightens and looks the great beast in the eyes, holds his gaze steady and true, despite every fiber of his being telling him to run, to hide, lest he be caught and slaughtered and eaten like the other crawling, squeaking things of the earth.

The beast is standing in the center of a midnight flame, every shift of his great body - chest expanding and contracting as he breathes, head turning to regard Will more clearly, feet sliding across stone to better center his weight - sends black and maroon flames twisting into the darkness.

And what a great beast Hannibal is.

Writhed in living shadows and flames that suck away the light, he stands taller than even his wendigo form. Antlered, but not, as if he cannot decide. Hands that are more claws and paws and knives. Shoulders broad, hips narrow, features regal. Skin at once both pale and as black as the flames that lick it. Eyes deeper and darker even than the night around them, a faint hint of maroon somewhere in the depths. Teeth, when he smiles, sharper than the greatest hunters of the Earth. A hint of wings. A hint of hooves. A hint of physics twisting and bending to accommodate something *wrong* . Something that shouldn't exist, but nonetheless does.

"Will."

Hannibal's voice is ever the same. Soft. Accent shaping his name into something Will realizes he has missed.

Will steps closer and the beast before him smiles, becomes once more the Hannibal he has known, though the beast is still there, in his eyes, in his movement, a hair's breadth away only, a promise etched into every angle, every sinew, every bone. Death awaits all whom the beast deems unworthy.

Will reaches out, disregarding the danger, slides trembling hands around Hannibal's body. Grips nerveless fingers into soft woolen fabric.

He rests his head on the great beast's broad shoulder and breathes. Breathes deep and clear, like a drowning man suddenly breaching the surface.

“You come to me now, Will, after all that has been lost?”

Will catches a sob in his throat, holds it behind clenched teeth. He cannot speak. He feels that if he does, if he tries, he will lose everything. Everything that he has left.

“You come to me, in supplication?”

Will says nothing. Grips Hannibal’s blazer more tightly.

The beast raises a hand, and fingers softer than he remembers, lacking the claws, the knives, slide into his hair. A soft sigh ghosts across his temple and Hannibal returns the embrace.

“When you wake, come to me.”

Will nods into the crook of Hannibal’s neck. Doesn’t fight as the beast pulls away and pushes him back.

They stand, mere feet between them, as the creaking, cracking sound returns as a whip to Will’s senses, the beast once again writhed in shadow and flame, eyes once again fathomless; antlers and not, hint of hooves, hint of claws, hint of broken physics.

Will swallows, wipes at his mouth, his eyes, whispers; “What are you?”

Hannibal smiles.

“Come to me.”

~*~

Will Graham wakes.

And he wakes.

And he wakes.

And he wakes and wakes and wakes.

~*~

TBC

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